BIOGRAPHIES OF THE IMAMS OF HADITH

(AL-BUKHARI, MUSLIM, ABU DAWUD, AT-TIRMIDHI, AN-NASA'I AND IBN MAJAH)

BY
E-DA`WAH COMMITTEE

Biographies of the Imams of Hadith

(Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah)

By

E-Da`wah Committee

www.edc.org.kw

www.the-faith.com

If you have any corrections, comments, or questions about this publication, please feel free to contact us at:

Email: info@the-faith.com

Facebook: http://on.fb.me/1ZVPbk3

Twitter: http://bit.ly/1lGSTep



Table of Contents

Introduction

Almighty Allah has chosen some people to be the torchbearers leading the Muslim community to the straight path and guiding its way in light of the instructions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). They are the religious scholars who devoted their life for teaching people the religion of God. They are the inheritors of Prophets and the most beloved ones to God the Almighty. Abu Ad-Darda' (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The scholars are heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither dinar nor dirham, leaving only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion." (Abu Dawud)

In fact, the science of Hadith is one of the greatest sciences of the Shari`ah. It explains the speech of Allah, relates the conditions and merits of Prophet (peace be upon him), conveys the commandments of Islam and represents the second main source of Islam. Those who keep themselves busy with acquiring the science of Hadith undoubtedly excel their peers in other kinds of science. It is enough that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has supplicated God for them as in the hadith narrated by Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him): "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saying, "May Allah make the faces of the person who hears something from us and communicates it to others exactly as he has heard it shining and radiant, for it may be that the recipient of knowledge understands it better than the one who has heard it." (At-Tirmidhi) It is also reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said, "This knowledge (Hadith) will be carried by the most upright from among each generation. They will remove from it the distortion of the



immoderate, the plagiarism of the liars and the misrepresentation of the ignorant. (Ibn `Abdul-Barr)

Those scholars of Hadith have undertaken the responsibility of narrating the hadiths of the Prophet to the following generations, verifying the weak of them from the strong, demonstrating them to people, inspecting their transmitters and discriminating between the authentic and the inauthentic. They have devoted their lives for this sacred mission, may Allah reward them all the best!

The E-Daw`ah Committee is pleased to present the book at hand which provides brief biographies of the compilers of Sahihs and Sunan, including the Imams: Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah. We have shed light on the early life, scientific journeys, righteousness, sheikhs, students, writings, death and praise of historians of each scholar. The book is highly beneficial to every Muslim, specially the knowledge seekers, as it introduces the biographies of the six imams of hadith in an interesting, simple and scientific way. At the end of the book, the historical resources of the contents are mentioned for those who want to read more about the Imams of hadith. We hope that the book is up to the readers' expectation and provide them with a historical rich meal about the life of the Imams of hadith who conveyed the words, actions and whole life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers to us.



Imam Al-Bukhari



His name is Abu `Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abu Al-Hasan Isma`il ibn Ibrahim ibn Al-Mughirah Al-Ga`fi Al-Muhkari, known as Al-Bukhari, the ever well-known scholar of Hadith. His collection of Hadith "Sahih Al-Bukhari" is considered the most authentic book in Islam next to the Glorious Qur'an.

Al-Bukhari's Birth and Early Life

Abu `Abdullah Al-Bukhari was born on **Friday 13 Shawwal, 194 AH** in the city of Bukhara in Khorasan (Uzbekistan) in a family renowned for its uprightness and righteousness. His father Isma`il was a practicing scholar and noble man, but he did not remain long and passed away while his children were too young. His son Muhammad showed significant love of seeking Islamic knowledge. Therefore, his mother sent him to the circles of the Qur'an and Hadith to learn in them.

At an early age, Imam Al-Bukhari showed peerless learning capacities, and excelled all his classmates. He was once asked, "When did you start seeking Hadith?" He said, "I was bestowed the talent of memorizing hadiths while I was in the kuttab (small school). He was asked, "How old were you at that time?" He answered, "10 years or less."

Al-Bukhari was exceptionally talented in memorization which helped him memorizing thousands of hadiths while in a very early age. Once, his classmates censured him for not writing hadiths like them. He told them that he committed all the hadiths they learned to memory. They tested his memory which proved perfect. One of the stories circulated about this unique talent is that of Salim ibn Mujahid who said, "I was with Muhammad ibn Salam Al-Baikandari who said to me, "If you came a little while ago, you would see a young boy memorizing 70000 hadiths." Salim said, 'I went out searching for this boy until I met him." Salim said, "I told him (Al-Bukhari), 'You claim that you memorize 70000 hadiths?' The young boy replied in the affirmative and said, "I will not mention a hadith from the Sahabah or their followers but I have knowledge about their birth, death and residence. Actually, Al-Bukhari was a nonpareil seeker of knowledge.

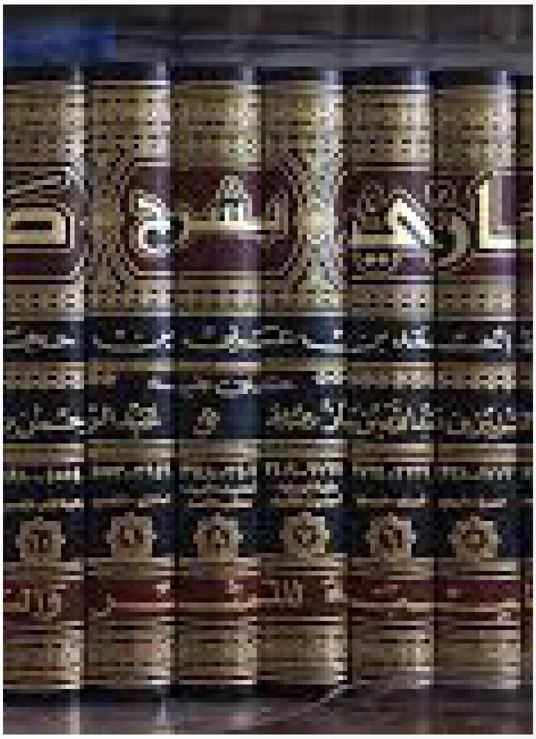
Al-Bukhari's Pursuit of Knowledge

Al-Bukhari started knowledge-seeking in the Kuttab. He memorized the whole Qur'an at the age of 10 years then he moved to Hadith learning. When he reached 16, he has memorized the entire hadiths narrated by Ibn Al-Mubarak and Waki`. He traveled for narrating hadiths to Balkh and Nishapur. Then, he went to Makkah and remained in it for a while, then he traveled to Baghdad, the Levant and Egypt. He acquired a great deal of knowledge and narrated many hadiths in these journeys. It is reported that his sheikhs are counted as more than **1000 scholars.**

Al-Bukhari started teaching Hadith when he was 17 years old. He used to say, "I memorized **100,000** authentic hadiths, and I memorized **200,000** inauthentic hadiths." Among the Sheikhs of Al-Bukhari were: Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Hammad ibn Shakir, Makki ibn Ibrahim and Abu `Asim An-Nabil. Among those who narrated from Al-Bukhari were: Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i, Muhammad ibn Nasr Al-Marwazi; and many others.



Al-Bukhari's Devoutness



Imam Al-Bukhari was a pious, practicing and devout knowledgeable scholar. He was distinguished with his exact observance of the Sunnah without any slackness or indolence. There is nothing more evidencing to his sincerity than the spread of his "Sahih Al-Bukhari" that is considered as the most authentic book next to the book of Allah, the Qur'an. Imam Al-Bukhari was a shining star in the space of piousness and fear of God. He used to say, "I hope that I meet Allah and that He does not call me into account for backbiting anyone." His absorption with Hadith did not impede him from observing Jihad. It is reported that he would frequent places of archery to be prepared for Jihad. Also, he was reported to go to borderline cities defending the Muslim state.



Scholars' Praise of Al-Bukhari

- **Raja' Al-Hafiz** said, "He (Al-Bukhari) is one of Allah's signs walking on the Earth."

- **Al-Husain As-Samarqandi** said, "Muhammad ibn Isma`il is singled out with three characteristics in addition to his praised ones. He was a reserved man, unambitious about what people had and completely bent on seeking knowledge."

- **An-Najm ibn Al-Fudayl** said, "I saw in a dream the Prophet was walking and Muhammad ibn Isma`il was walking behind him, wherever the Prophet placed his foot Muhammad Ibn Isma`il would place his foot."

- **Yahya ibn Ja`far** said, "If I was able to give to Muhammad ibn Isma`il from my lifetime, I would do that because my demise equals the death of one man while the demise of Al-Bukhari means the demise of knowledge."

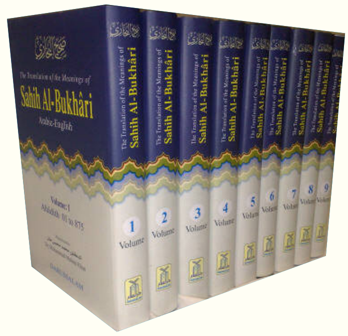
- **Na`im ibn Hammad** said, "Muhammad ibn Isma`il is the Faqih of this Ummah."

- **Ibn Khuzaymah** said, "I have never seen underneath the sky one who is more knowledgeable and memorizer of the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) than Muhammad ibn Isma`il (Al-Bukhari)."

- **Al-Hafiz Abu `Amr Al-Khaffaf** said, "Muhammad ibn Isma`il is more knowledgeable of hadith than Is-haq ibn Rahawayh, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and other scholars with 20 degrees. Whoever speaks badly about him, I curse him 1000 curses. Muhammad (Al-Bukhari) is the most pious and purest scholar and I have not seen anyone like him.

- **`Abdullah ibn Hammad** said, "I hoped that I was a hair in the chest of Muhammad ibn Isma`il."

Al-Bukhari's Words:



- I know nothing that people may need but is found in the Qur'an and Sunnah.
- I hope that I meet Allah and that He does not call me into account for backbiting anyone.
- I did not start teaching hadith until I became full-aware of the authentic and the inauthentic narrations, reviewed all the books of opinion and visited Basra 5 times or about that, and left no authentic hadith but I wrote it except what I deemed not authentic.
- I never willed to start any speech that included the worldly life but I will start with praising and commending Allah.

Al-Bukhari's Writings

Imam Al-Bukhari compiled numerous books but the most widely known of them is "Al-Jami` Al-Musnad As-Sahih Al-Mukhtasar min Umuri Rasullillah wa Sunanih wa Ayyamih." It is translated as "The Abridged Collection of Authentic Hadith with Connected Chains regarding Matters of the Prophet, His practices and His Times." It is known as Sahih Al-Bukhari.

Imam Muhammad ibn Isma`il compiled other books including,

- Al-Adab Al-Mufrad
- At-Tarikh Al-Kabir
- Khalq Af`al Al-`Ibad
- Raf` Al-Yadain fi As-Salah
- Al-Kuna

Al Bukahri's Trial and Death

When Imam Al-Bukhari reached Nishapur he was widely welcomed. The scholar of Nishapur at that time was a man called Muhammad ibn Yahya Adh-Dhahli. Shortly after Al-Bukhari's arrival, Adh-Dhahli's hadith circle became empty. He got furious and enraged against Al-Bukhari, and thus started fighting Imam Al Bukhari by spreading false rumors about him. He disseminated that Imam Al-Bukhari believed that the Qur'an is created. Although Al-Bukhari never said so and he was completely innocent of this, Muhammad ibn Yahya continued his allegations and fight against Al-Bukhari until he compelled Al-Bukhari to leave the whole city and return to his homeland Bukhara.

Then, Al-Bukhari was subject to another ordeal by the ruler of Bukhara who asked A-Bukhari to visit him and narrate Sahih Al-Bukhari to his children. Imam Al-Bukhari was a self-proud man, he refused saying, "Knowledge is to be sought," meaning that if anyone wants to learn Sahih Al-Bukhari, he should come to the circle of Hadith. This caused alienation between him and the ruler. In addition, the former rumors reached that ruler who was already aggravated by that situation of Al-Bukhari. Thereupon, He expelled Imam Al-Bukhari out of Bukhara.

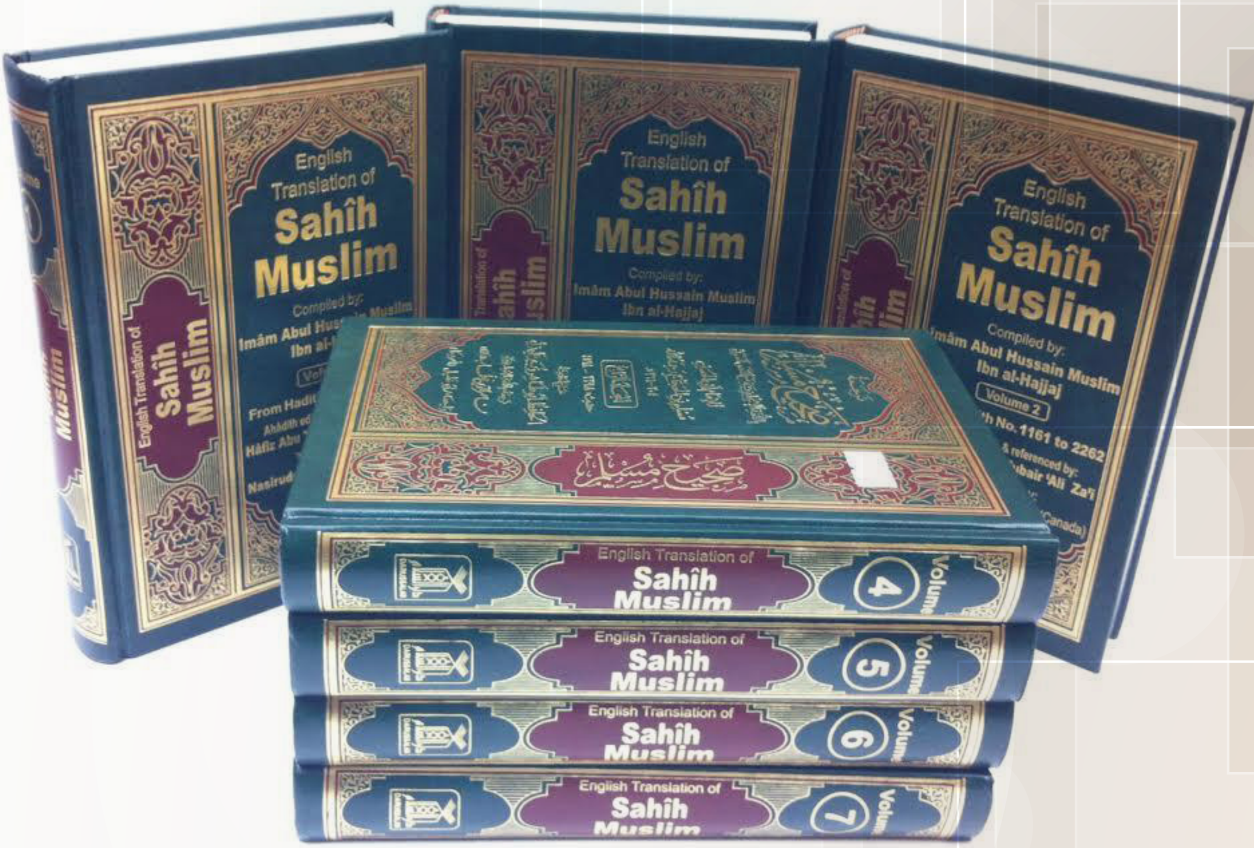
As he has grown old, the expulsion of Imam Al-Bukhari caused painful aches inside him. On **1 Shawwal 256 AH,** Imam Al-Bukhari passed away at the age of 62 years in a small town near Samarkand called Tadzhikistan.

May Allah confer His Mercy upon our greatest Imam!



Imam Muslim

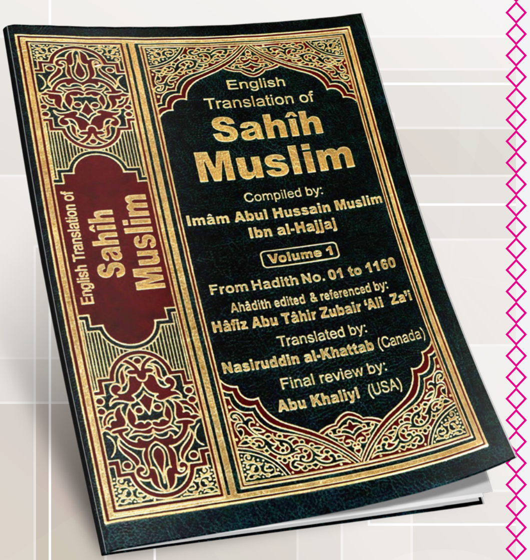
His name is Abu Al-Husayn Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj ibn Muslim ibn Ward ibn Kushadh Al-Qushairy An-Naysabur, the outstanding and eminent authority of Hadith. He is one the leading scholars and memorizers of the Prophet's narrations and hadiths. His Hadith collection "Sahih Muslim" is regarded as one of the two most authentic books of Hadith, alongside Sahih Al-Bukhari.



Imam Muslim's Birth and Early Life

Imam Muslim was born in Nishapur in **206 AH** (821) from a noble Arab tribe called Qushair. In a family of knowledge and good conduct, for his father was a regular attendant of the circles of knowledge and upright man, and in a town replete with Islamic knowledge, Abu Al-Husayn Muslim grew up stuck on knowledge. He began his knowledge journey in his tender age, as Imam Adh-Dhahaby said, "The beginning of his Hadith learning was in 218 AH under Yahya ibn Yahya At-Tamimi and he offered Hajj in 220 AH while he was still beardless." It means that he was then about 12 years old or less when he attended the circles of Hadith.

Imam Muslim's Pursuit of Knowledge



Abu Al-Husayn started learning hadith under the scholars in his town Nishapur, then he began his long scientific journeys at an early age. As-Siyuti said, "He (Muslim) travelled to Basra when he was 14, then he went to Hejaz to perform Hajj and study Hadith under the Imams of Hadith in Makkah and Al-Madinah. After that, he travelled to Egypt, the Levant, Iraq and returned to Ar-Rayy and then Khurasan. He remained about 15 years pursuing knowledge of Hadith during which he met many sheikhs and collected more than **300000 hadiths."** He travelled to these places more than once without any tiredness or wearisome. In these tours, he bent on knowledge seeking, scrutinizing the narrators of hadith and gaining the fruits of knowledge.

Imam Muslim's Sheikhs and Students

Imam Muslim studied under a great deal of scholars of hadith and narrated hadiths from numberless people. Among the prominent scholars from which he narrated hadiths were `Abdullah ibn Maslamah Al-Qan`aby, Yahya ibn Yahya An-Naysabury, Qutaybah ibn Sa`id, Sa`id ibn Mansur, Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Is-haq ibn Rahuwayh, Abu Khaithamah Zuhair ibn Harb, Abu Kurayb Muhammad ibn Al-`Alaa', Abu Musa Muhammad ibn Al-Muthanna, Muhammad ibn Yahya Adh-Dhuhaly, Abu Muhammad ibn Isma`il Al-Bukhari, `Abdullah Ad-Darimi and others. It is related that his sheikhs were about 220 of the narrators of hadith. He accompanied Imam Al-Bukhari and was affected by his method in compiling hadiths. It is reported that he would say to Imam Al-Bukhari, "Let me kiss your legs, O master of teachers, leader of Muhaddithin (scholars of hadith) and doctor of Hadith knowledge and its deficiencies."

An-Nawawi said, "He (Muslim) took hadith from Yahya ibn Yahya, Is-haq ibn Rahuwaih and others in Khurasan, and from Muhammad ibn Mahran Al-Jammal, Abu Ghassan and others in Ar-Rayy, from Ahmad ibn Hanbal, `Abdullah ibn Muslim Al-Qa`nabi and others in Iraq, from Sa`id ibn Mansur, Abu Mus`ab and other in Hejaz, from `Amr ibn Suwad, Harmalah ibn Yahya and others in Egypt, and from many others.

As for his students, they were plentiful. Among them were `Ali ibn Al-Hasan ibn `Eisa Al-Hilali, Muhammad ibn `Abdul-Wahhab Al-Farra', Al-Husain ibn Muhammad Al-Qabbani, Abu `Eisa At-Tirmidhi, `Abdullah ibn Yahya As-Sarkhasi Al-Qady, `Ali ibn Al-Husain Ar-Razi, Salih ibn Muhammad Jazarah, Nasr ibn Ahmed Al-Hafiz, Ibn Khuzaimah, Abu `Uwanah, `Abdur-Rahmadn ibn Abu Hatim Ar-Razi, and many others

Imam Muslim's Writings

Imam Muslim compiled a lot of books, the most important of which are

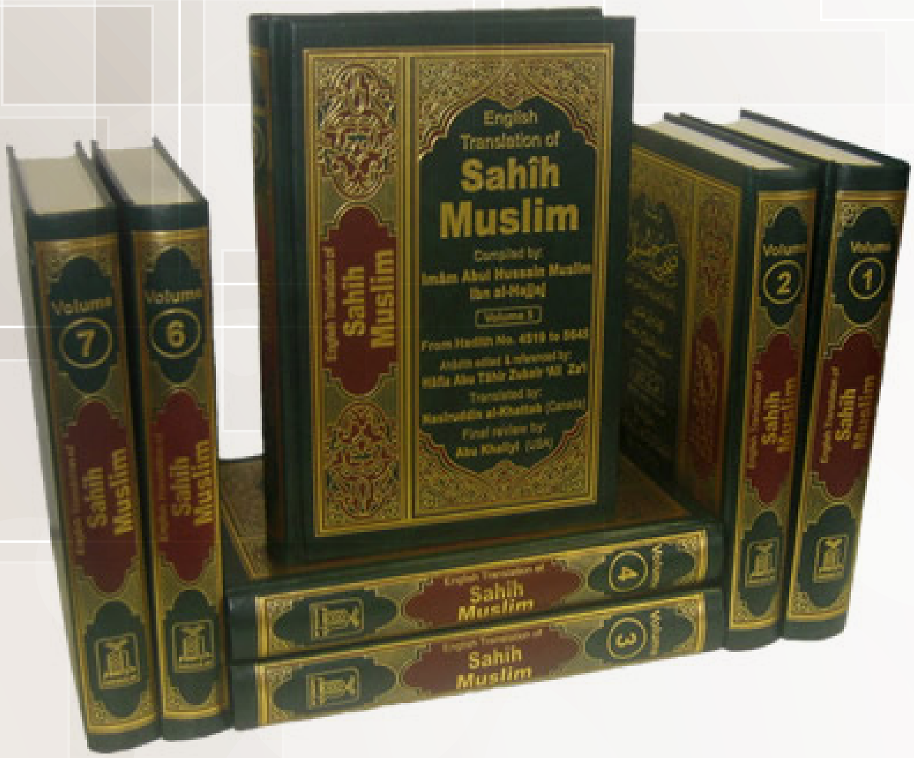
- Al-Musnad As-Sahih (Sahih Muslim)
- At-Tamiyiz
- Kitab Al-`Ilal
- Kitab Al-Wuhdan
- Kitab Al-Afrad
- Kitab Al-Aqran
- Kitab Al-Mukhadramin
- Kitab Awham Al-Muhaddithin
- Kitab At-Tabaqat

Scholars' Praise of Imam Muslim

- **Muhammad ibn `Abdul-Wahhab Al-Farra'** said, "Muslim was one of the prominent scholars and vessels of knowledge."
- **Muhammad ibn Bashshar** said, "The memorizers of hadiths are four: Abu Zur`ah, Muhammad ibn Isma`il Al-Bukhari, Ad-Darimi, and Muslim."
- **Al-Husain ibn `Ali An-Naysaburi** said, "There is no book under the canopy of the sky more authentic than the book of Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj in the knowledge of Hadith."
- **Ahmed ibn Salamah** said, "I saw Abu Zur`ah and Abu Hatim advancing Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj in knowing the authentic hadiths upon the sheikhs of their age."
- **Ibn Khalkan** said, "He is the compiler of the Sahih, one of the greatest memorizers and leading scholars of hadith."
- **Ibn Al-Jawzi** said, "He is a prominent scholar of Hadith and one of the vessels of knowledge."
- **Sadi` ibn Hasan Al-Qanuji** said, "Imam Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj Al-Qushairy Al-Baghdadi is one of the outstanding memorizers and knowledgeable scholars of hadith, he is the leader of Khurasan in the knowledge of hadith following Al-Bukhari."

Imam Muslim's Words

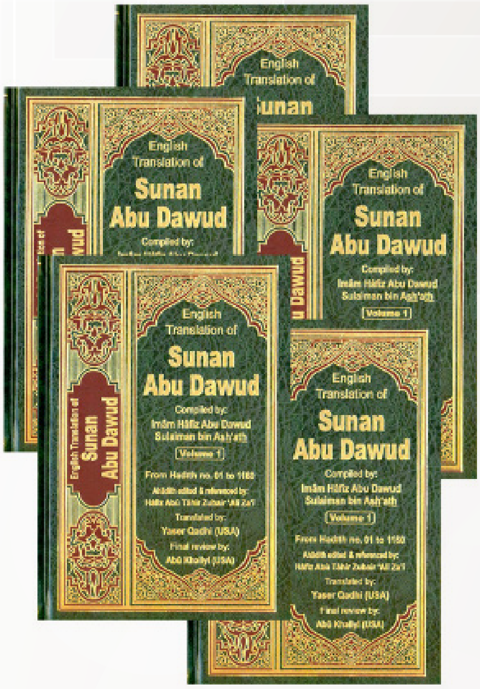
Muslim used to say to Imam Al-Bukhari, "Let me kiss your legs, O master of teachers, leader of Muhaddithin (scholars of hadith) and doctor of Hadith knowledge and its deficiencies."



Imam Muslim's Death

Imam Muslim lived for 55 years and died in Rajab, 261 AH. Regarding the cause of his death, Adh-Dhahabi mentioned on the authority of Ahmad ibn Salamah, "A gathering of knowledge and revision was held for Abu Al-Husayn Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj where a hadith that he did not know was mentioned. He went home and lit his lamp and said to those at home, "No one should enter the house (i.e. disturb me)." He was told, "We have been gifted a basket of dates." He said, "Put it out for me," so they served it to him. He started searching for the hadith and taking a date at a time until the morning, by which time the dates where finished and he had finally found the hadith. Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah (one of the reporters of this narration) added, "A reliable companion of ours added that dates were the cause of his death."

Imam Abu Dawud



His name is Sulaiman ibn Al-Ash`ath ibn Is-haq ibn Bashir ibn Shaddad Abu Dawud Al-Azdi As-Sijistani from Sijistan, known today as Sistan, the compiler of the well-known collection of hadith entitled "Sunan Abu Dawud" which comes in degree and fame after Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Abu Dawud was one of the most knowledgeable scholars of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), its fiqh (jurisprudence), deficiencies, texts and chains of narrators throughout the Islamic history.

The scholars of his time recognized his high scientific status, as indicated by some narrations. It is reported that Sahl ibn `Abdullah At-Tastury came to Abu Dawud and said, "O Abu Dawud, I want something from you." He said, "What is it?" Sahl said, "On a condition that you say that you will fulfill it if possible." Abu Dawud replied in the affirmative. Sahl said, "Get out your tongue with which you narrated the hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) so that I kiss it." Abu Dawud accept that and Sahl kissed his tongue.

Abu Dawud's Birth and Early Life

Abu Dawud was born in Sijistan in **202 AH** in the outset of the golden scientific century which witnessed the rise of Imams of Hadith, such Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Yahya ibn Ma'in, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, At-Tirmidhi and many others. He grew up fond of knowledge, especially Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), aided by his unique talent of memorization that helped him commit a great deal of hadiths to memory. Thus, at a very early age, Abu Dawud collected lots of hadiths in a short time.

Abu Dawud’s Pursuit of Knowledge

Just as all Hadith students, Abu Dawud toured the Islamic regions and cities pursuing Hadith wherever it was. In **220 AH,** Abu Dawud traveled to Baghdad when he was only 18, and two years later he moved to the Levant. These early journeys helped him get high chains of transmitters, even higher than those of Imam Muslim at sometimes. He moved to many different places narrating and collecting the hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi said, “He (Abu Dawud) narrated hadith from the people of Iraq, Khurasan, the Levant, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula.”

Abu Dawud’s Sheikhs and Students

Ibn Hajar said, “It is said that the Sheikhs of Abu Dawud in his book “As-Sunan” and other books were about **300 persons**.” Among his renowned Sheikhs were Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Yahya ibn Ma“in, `Uthman ibn Abu Shaybah, Is-haq ibn Rahawayh, Sulayman ibn Harb, Abu Al-Walid At-Tayalisi, Qutaybah ibn Sa`ad, Sa`id ibn Mansur, Abu Ja`far An-Nufaili, Zuhayr ibn Harb, Abu Isma`il Al-Bukhari and many others.

Notably, Abu Dawud accompanied Imam Ahmad for a long time and loved him so much. He was so fascinated with Imam Ahmad to the extent that he would mimic him in his appearance and speech. This companionship with Imam Ahmad helped him acquire the knowledge of Fiqh in addition to Hadith. Abu Dawud compiled a book on the questions and replies of Imam Ahmad entitled “Masa’il Ahmad”. He presented his book As-Sunan to Imam Ahmad who praised it.

As for his students, the list is endless. Among them were Abu `Eisa At-Tirmidhi, Abu “Abdur-Rahman An-Nasa’i, Abu Bakr Al-Khallal, Isma“il ibn Muhammad As-Saffar, Abu Bakr ibn Dawud Al-Asfahani, Abu `Uwanah Al-Asfarayini, Muhammad ibn Nasr Al-Mirwazi and Abu Bakr Yahya As-Suli.

Those who narrated his book As-Sunan from him are 9 narrators, including Abu At-Tayyib Al-Ashnani, Abu `Eisa Ar-Ramly, Abu `Ali Al-Lu’lu’i, Abu Bakr ibn Dasah At-Tammar, Abu Sa`id ibn Ziyad Al-A`rabi, Abu Al-Hasan ibn Al-`Abd Al-Ansari, Abu Usamah Ar-Ru’ami and Abu Salim Al-Haludi. It is reported that Imam Ahmad narrated one hadith from him, something that Abu Dawud would boast of.

Abu Dawud's Writings

In addition to his most renowned book As-Sunan, Imam Abu Dawud wrote a lot of books such as Al-Marasil, Masa'il Al-Imam Ahmad, An-Nasikh wal-Mansukh, Al-Qadr, Az-Zuhd and many others.

Scholars' Praise of Abu Dawud

- **Abu Bakr Al-Khallal** said, "Abu Dawud Sulayman Al-Ash`ath, the superior scholar of his time, was a man that nobody excelled in recognizing the verification of (Shari`ah) sciences and in his awareness of their questions. He was an outstanding devout person."
- **Ahmed ibn Muhammad ibn Yasin Al-Harawi** said, "Sulayman ibn Al-Ash`ath Abu Dawud was one of the memorizers of the actions of the Prophet and his Hadith, its deficiencies and chain of narrations. He was at the peak of virtuousness, abstinence, righteousness and devoutness."
- **Ibrahim Al-Harbi** said, "The hadith has been made pliable for Abu Dawud similarly as the iron was made pliable to Dawud (peace be upon him)."
- **Musa ibn Harun Al-Hafiz** said, "Abu Dawud was created in this life for Hadith, and in the hereafter for Paradise. I have not seen someone better than him."
- **Abu Hatim ibn Hayyan** said, "He (Abu Dawud) was one of the leading persons of this world in matters of Fiqh, knowledge, memorization, asceticism, devoutness and proficiency. He compiled and defended the Sunan (Sunnah of the Prophet)."
- **Al-Hakim** said, "There is no disagreement about that Abu Dawud is the leader of the scholars of hadith during his time."
- **Adh-Dhahabi** said, "He was a head in hadith and Fiqh. He was distinguished with dignity, esteem, uprightness and devoutness so that he resembled Ahmed ibn Hanbal."

Abu Dawud's Words:



- The hidden craving is the love of leadership.
- Whoever satisfies with simple cloth and food has spared his body.
- I collected in my book As-Sunan 4800 hadiths but it is enough for the religion of a person only four hadiths from among them: "Deeds are judged by intentions," "A sign of man's good observance of Islam (his piety) is to keep away from that which does not concern him," "A believer will not attain true faith unless he accepts for his brother that which he accepts for himself," and "The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear, and between that are matters that are doubtful (not clear).."

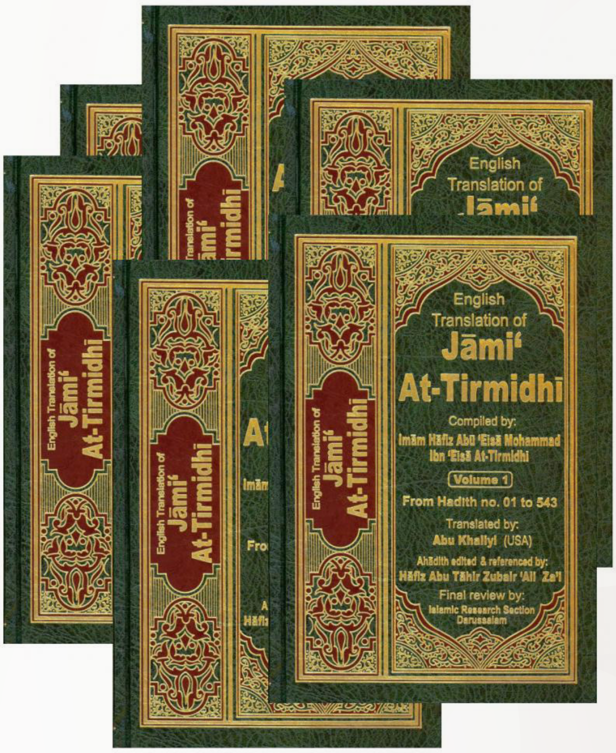
Abu Dawud's Death

Abu Dawud (may Allah confer His Mercy upon him) died on Friday 15 Shawwal in **275 AH** in Basrah and was buried alongside of the grave of Sufyan Ath-Thawri.

Imam At-Tirmidhi

His name is Muhammad ibn `Eisa ibn Sawrah ibn Musa ibn Ad-Dahhak At-Tirmidhi Al-Bughi As-Sulami, from the well-known Arab tribe of Sulaim ibn Mansur. He is the compiler of the well-known book of Hadith "Jami` At-Tirmidhi" which is distinguished by At-Tirmidhi's unique approach of the classification and verification of hadiths. Imam At-Tirmidhi is one of the outstanding scholars of Hadith who spent their lives in narrating and verifying the hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him). `Amr ibn `Alak said, "When Muhammad ibn Isma`il Al-Bukhari died, he did not leave behind anyone in Khurasan like Abu `Eisa (At-Tirmidhi), in terms of knowledge and God-fearing."

At-Tirmidhi's Birth and Early Life



Abu `Eisa was born in the beginning of **209 AH** in Tirmidh. His grandfather was from Marw. Scholars differed whether he was born blind or not but the correct view is that he was not born so but he lost his eyesight in his old age because of his abundant study of Hadith. Ibn Kathir said, "It appears from the state of At-Tirmidhi that blindness happened to him after he travelled, heard (hadiths), wrote, argued and compiled (Hadith books)." Abu `Eisa was exceptionally distinguished by his matchless capacity of memorizing hadiths. Ibn Al-`Imad Al-Hanbali said, "He (At-Tirmidhi) excelled all his peers, and was a prodigy in memorization and proficiency."

Imam At-Tirmidhi devoted his whole life for learning and studying Hadith. He travelled a lot and learned under the greatest scholars of Hadith, such as Imam Al-Bukhari who left a great effect upon our scholar Abu `Eisa At-Tirmidhi.

At-Tirmidhi's Pursuit of Knowledge

Imam At-Tirmidhi was bent on learning hadith. He travelled to numerous places and narrated hadiths from many persons. He travelled to Al-Hijaz, Basra, Kufah, Baghdad, Ar-Rayy and Khurasan. Al-Hafiz Al-Mizzi said, "He toured the cities and heard from a great number of people from Khurasan, Iraq, Al-Hijaz and other places." It is narrated that he took Hadith from more than **200 narrators** of Hadith.

The numerous journeys of Imam At-Tirmidhi helped him get high Isnad (chain of narrators). He took hadiths from some of the teachers of both Imam Al-Bukhari and Muslim, the teachers of Imam Al-Bukhari that Muslim did not narrate from, and the teachers of Imam Muslim that Imam Al-Bukhari did not narrate from. Not only that, he narrated Hadith from 42 narrators that the five Imams of Hadith (Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah) did not narrate from. Also, he narrated hadiths along with five scholars of Hadith (Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah) from the same 9 narrators of Hadith.

Hadith was not the sole knowledge that Imam At-Tirmidh acquired; he was an encyclopedic scholar. He was versed in other branches of knowledge, such as Fiqh, Islamic History, Arabic language and other sciences. He was renowned for his excellent understanding and deduction of the Fiqh rulings from hadiths. The great scholar Abu Al-Hasan An-Nadawi said, "He (At-Tirmidhi) was the first to broach what is called nowadays "Comparative Fiqh" and he had a great merit that the Muslim community has to admit. His efforts saved a lot of the Islamic heritage of the schools of Fiqh from loss."

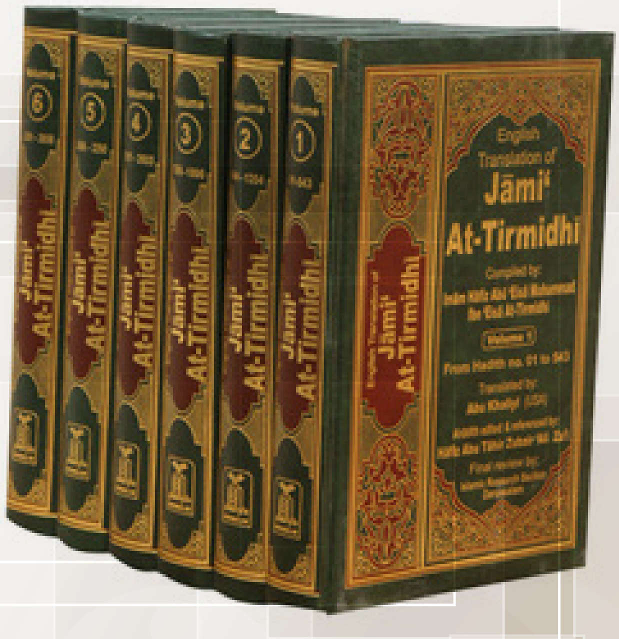
At-Tirmidhi's Sheikhs and Students

Among his well-known teachers were Ibrahim ibn Isma`il ibn Yahia, Abu Is-haq At-Tabari, Ibrahim ibn Hatim Al-Harawi, Ibrahim ibn Harun Al-Balkhi, Ibrahim ibn Ya`qub Al-Jawjajani, Muhammad ibn Bashshar ibn Bindar, Muhammad ibn Al-Muthanna, Qutaybah ibn Sa`id Al-Baghlani, `Ali ibn Hajar Al-Mirwazi, Muhammad ibn Isma`il Al-Bukhari, Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj An-Naysaburi, Ahmad ibn Mani` Al-Baghawi, Mahmud ibn Ghaylan Al-Mirwazi, Abdullah ibn `Abdur-Rahman Ad-Darimi, Is-haq ibn Rahawih and many others.

A great deal of Hadith narrators learned at the hands of Imam At-Tirmidhi and took Hadith from him, including Abu Al-`Abbas Muhammad ibn Ahmad Al-Mahbubi Al-Mirwazi, Abu Sa`id Ash-Shashi, Abu Dharr Muhammad ibn Ibrahim At-Tirmidhi, Abu Muhammad Al-Hasan Al-Qattan, Abu Hamid Ahmad ibn `Abdullah Al-Mirwazi, Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn `Aamer As-Samarqandi, Ahmad ibn Yusuf An-Nasafi, Al-Hasan ibn Yusuf Al-Farabri, Ar-Rabi` ibn Hayyan Al-Bahili and many others.

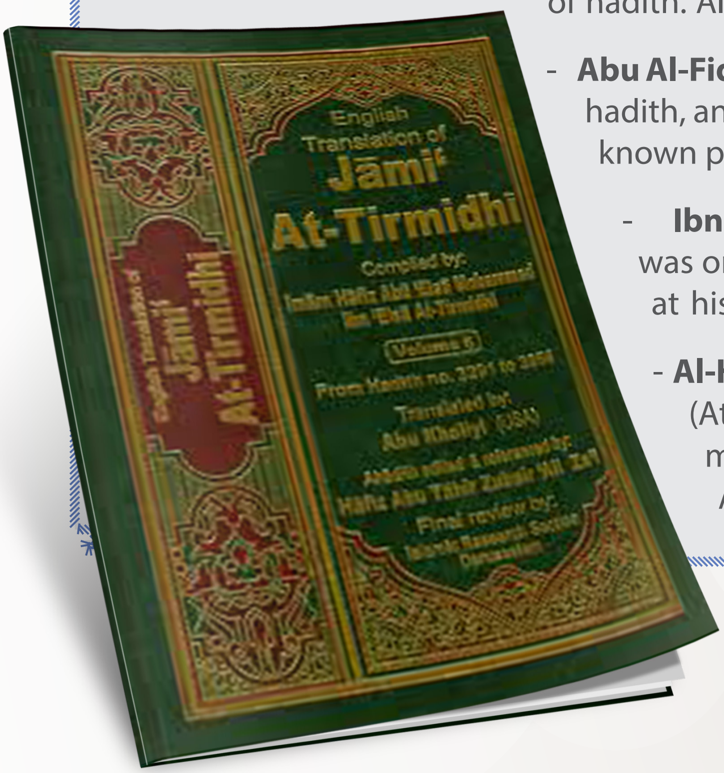
At-Tirmidhi's Writings

- Al-Jami` Al-Mukhtasar min As-Sunan `an Rasulillah, known as "Jami` At-Tirmidhi)
- Al-`Ilal As-Sughra
- Az-Zuhd
- Al-`Ilal Al-Kubra
- Ash-Shama'il An-Nabawiyyah wa Al-Fada'il Al-Mustafawiyyah
- Al-Asmaa' wa Al-Kuna
- Kitab At-Tarikh



Scholars' Praise of At-Tirmidhi

- **Abu Sa`d Al-Idrisi** said, "Muhammad ibn `Eisa At-Tirmidhi, the blind memorizer of hadith, is one of the leading scholars of the knowledge of Hadith. He compiled the book Al-Jami`, At-Tawarikh and Al-`Ilal in a proficient and scientific way. He was an example of the memorization of hadith."
- **As-Sama`ani** said, "There is no dispute that he (At-Tirmidhi) was the Imam of his age." Also, he said, "He was one of the leading Imams of hadith."
- **Ibn Al-Athir Al-Jazari** said, "He was one of the prominent memorizing scholars of hadith. Also, he was well-informed of Fiqh."
- **Abu Al-Fida'** said, "He was a leading memorizer of hadith, and he was blind. He was one of the well-known proficient scholars of hadith."
- **Ibn Kathir** said regarding At-Tirmidhi, "He was one of the Imams of this matter (Hadith) at his time."
- **Al-Hafiz Abu Al-Hajjaj Al-Mizzi** said, "He (At-Tirmidhi was one of the prominent memorizing Imams (of Hadith) by whom Allah has benefitted Muslims."



At-Tirmidhi's Death

After a life replete with knowledge-seeking, travelling for narrating hadiths and teaching and explaining hadith, Imam At-Tirmidhi passed away on **Monday 13th of Rajab, 279 AH** in Bugh (a village lies in his hometown Tirmidh).

May Allah confer mercy upon him and reward him all the good for his efforts in preserving the Sunnah of the Prophet and narrating it to people!



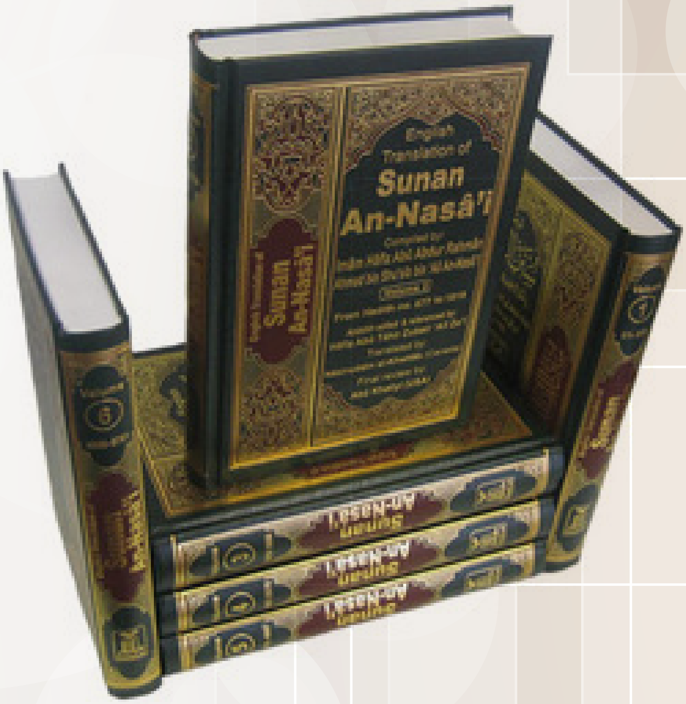
Imam An-Nasa'i



His name is Abu `Abdur-Rahman Ahmad ibn Shu`ayb ibn `Ali ibn Sinan ibn Bahr Al-Khurasani An-Nasa'i, attributed to his homeland Nasa. He was a great memorizer and critic of Hadith and one of the key figures in Muslim scholarship. He was renowned for his utmost extensive awareness of the defects of Hadith and the conditions of the narrators. He is the author of the famous book of Hadith "Sunan An-Nasa'i" or "As-Sunan As-Sughra" as he named it.

An-Nasa'i's Birth and Early Life

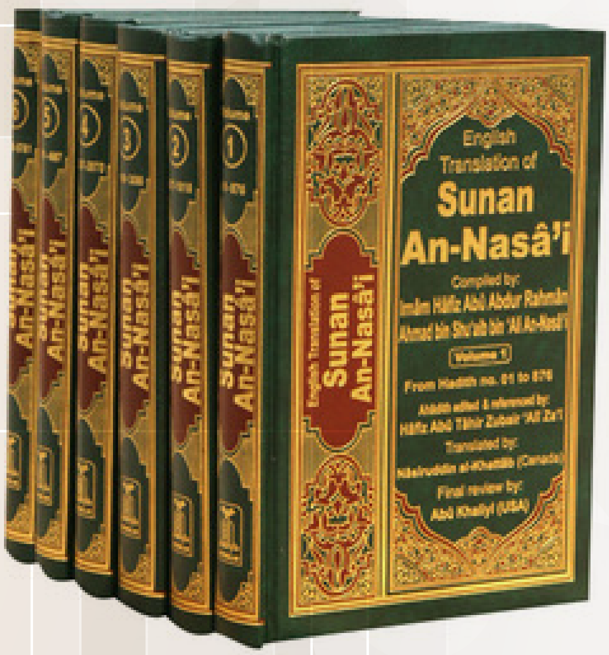
An-Nasa'i was born in Nasa, a town in Khurasan, in **214 AH.** He started learning knowledge at a very early age. He began his scientific journeys when he was 15 years old when he travelled to the great scholar of Hadith Qutaybah ibn Sa`id in Baghlan. Qutaybah narrated hadiths from Imam Malik, Al-Layth ibn Sa`ad and other narrators of this class. Abu `Abdur-Rahman An-Nasa'i remained with Qutaybah for 14 months studying hadith at his hands. Imam An-Nasa'i was fond of seeking knowledge especially the narration of hadiths, for which he has devoted his whole life. Thus, he became a leading scholar and superior Hadith authority of his time.



Features of An-Nasa'i's Character

- `Abu `Abdur-Rahman was a dedicated worshipper. Abu Al-Husain Muhammad ibn Muzfir said, "I heard from our Sheikhs in Egypt their acknowledgement of his (Abu Abdur-Rahman's An-Nasa'i) advancement and leadership in knowledge. They also stressed his diligence in worship at all times and his persistence in offering Hajj and partaking in Jihad."
- He used to fast one day and break the other, a habitual worship of the Prophet Dawud (David, peace be upon him).
- He was a courageous fighter. He used to go for Jihad and showed excessive boldness and sacrifice for Muslims.
- He was good-faced and bright-colored. He had 4 wives and 2 maid slaves. It was narrated that he would share his time between his wives and maid slaves equally.
- He would prefer to wear the Nubian garments and eat cocks that were bought, fattened and castrated for him.

An-Nasa'i's Pursuit of Knowledge



Imam An-Nasa'i remained with his Sheikh Qutaybah for more than one year, then he travelled to many places including Khurasan, Al-Hijaz, Egypt, Iraq and the Ash-Sham (the Levant). After these long journeys, he settled in Egypt where students of Hadith came to him from everywhere narrating hadiths from him and learning at his hands. He was a trustworthy, well-established scrutinizer of Hadith and its narrators and was fully aware of the juristic rulings and explanation of the hadiths. Imam Al-Hakim said, "The sayings of Imam An-Nasa'i regarding the Fiqh (Jurisprudence) of hadiths are many, and one is astonished about the perfection of his words."



An-Nasa'i's Sheikhs and Students

Among his prominent Sheikh were Qutaybah ibn Sa`id, Is-haq ibn Ibrahim, Is-haq ibn Rahuwayih, Abu Bakr Bindar, Hisham ibn `Ammar, Muhammad ibn An-Nadr, Suwaid ibn Nasr, Ziyad ibn Ayyub, Sawwar ibn `Abdullah Al-`Anbari, `Utbah ibn `Abdullah Al-Marwazi, Muhammad ibn Muthanna, and many others.

And among notable students who took hadiths from him were Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salamah Al-Azdi, the renowned Hanafi scholar of Fiqh; Ahmad ibn Muhammad Al-Hashimi, known as Ibn As-Sunni, the great trustworthy memorizer of hadith; Sulaiman ibn Matir Al-Lakhmi At-Tabarani, the greatest memorizer of Hadith; Abu Ja`far At-Tahawi; Abu `Uthman An-Naysaburi; Hamzah ibn Muhammad Al-Kinani; Abu Ja`far Ahmad ibn Isma`il An-Nahhas An-Nahawi and many others.

An-Nasa'i's Writings

Imam An-Nasa'i has compiled many books of Hadith, the most renowned of which is his book **As-Sunan Al-Sughra** known as Sunan An-Nasa'i or Al-Mujtaba which is a briefing of his book of Hadith As-Sunan Al-Kubra. Also, he compiled other books including:

- Fada'il Al-Qur'an
- At-Tabaqat
- Fada'il As-Sahabah
- `Amal Al-Yawm wa Al-Laylah
- Rasa'il fi `Ulum Al-Hadith
- Ad-Du`afa' wal-Matrukin

Scholars' Praise of An-Nasa'i

Imam An-Nasa'i received a great commendation from many of the prominent scholars of Hadith which testifies to his encyclopedic memorization, mastery and awareness of deficiencies and narrators of hadiths.

- **Imam Adh-Dhahabi** said, "There was no one on the onset of the 300 AH year more perfect in memorization than An-Nasa'i. He was well-versed in Hadith, its deficiencies and narrators, even more than Muslim, Abu Dawud and Abu `Eisa (At-Tirmidhi). He was in the same rank of Al-Bukhari and Abu Zur`ah."
- **Al-Qadi Taj Ad-Din As-Subki** said, "I asked our sheikh Adh-Dhahabi, 'Who was more perfect in memorization Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj or An-Nasa'i?'" He replied, "An-Nasa'i," and I mentioned this to my father who agreed to it."
- **Ad-Daraqutni** said, "Abu `Abdur-Rahman (An-Nasa'i) was placed at the top of all the scholars of this (hadith) knowledge in his era."
- **Abu `Ali An-Naysaburi** said, "The unchallenged leading scholar of Hadith is Abu `Abdur-Rahman An-Nasa'i, who narrated hadiths to us."
- **Abu `Abdullah ibn Mandah** said, "Those who narrated the authentic hadiths and distinguished the established from the deficient and the truth from the falsehood are only four: Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and Abu `Abdur-Rahman An-Nasa'i."
- **Imam Ad-Daraqutni** said, "Abu Bakr Al-Haddad Ash-Shafi`i narrated lots of hadiths but he did not narrate to others except the hadiths of An-Nasa'i. He said, 'I accepted him (An-Nasa'i) as an excuse between me and Almighty Allah.'"
- **Ibn Al-Athir** said, "He (Abu `Abdur-Rahman An-Nasa'i) adopted the Shafi`i school of Fiqh, and he had some rituals according to the school of Imam Ash-Shafi`i. He was a devout and well-verified scholar."

An-Nasa'i's Death

Abu `Abdullah Al-Hafiz said, "I heard `Ali ibn `Umar saying, '`Abu `Abdur-Rahman An-Nasa'i was the most knowledgeable among the Sheikhs of Egypt in terms of Fiqh, and authenticity and narrators of hadiths, during his time. Being the best among them, they felt envy towards him. Thus, he moved to Ar-Ramlah (a town in Palestine) where he was asked about Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan. He did not reply in a good thing, and thus people beat him badly. He asked to be moved to Makkah, in spite of his illness, where he passed away. Abu `Abdullah said, "In addition to his multiple merits, he was given martyrdom at the end of his life." However, there are other opinions that he died in Palestine. He passed away on **Monday 13 Safar 303 AH.**

Imam Ibn Majah



Almighty Allah has chosen some people to be the knowledge torchbearers leading the Muslim community to the straight path and guiding its way in light of the instructions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). They are the religious scholars who devoted their life for teaching people the religion of God. They are the inheritors of Prophets and the most beloved ones to God the Almighty.

One of the leading figures of knowledge is the outstanding scholar of hadith Ibn Majah Abu `Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yazid ibn Majah Al-Rab`i Al-Qazwini. In the following lines, we will try to shed some light on the life of this great personality.

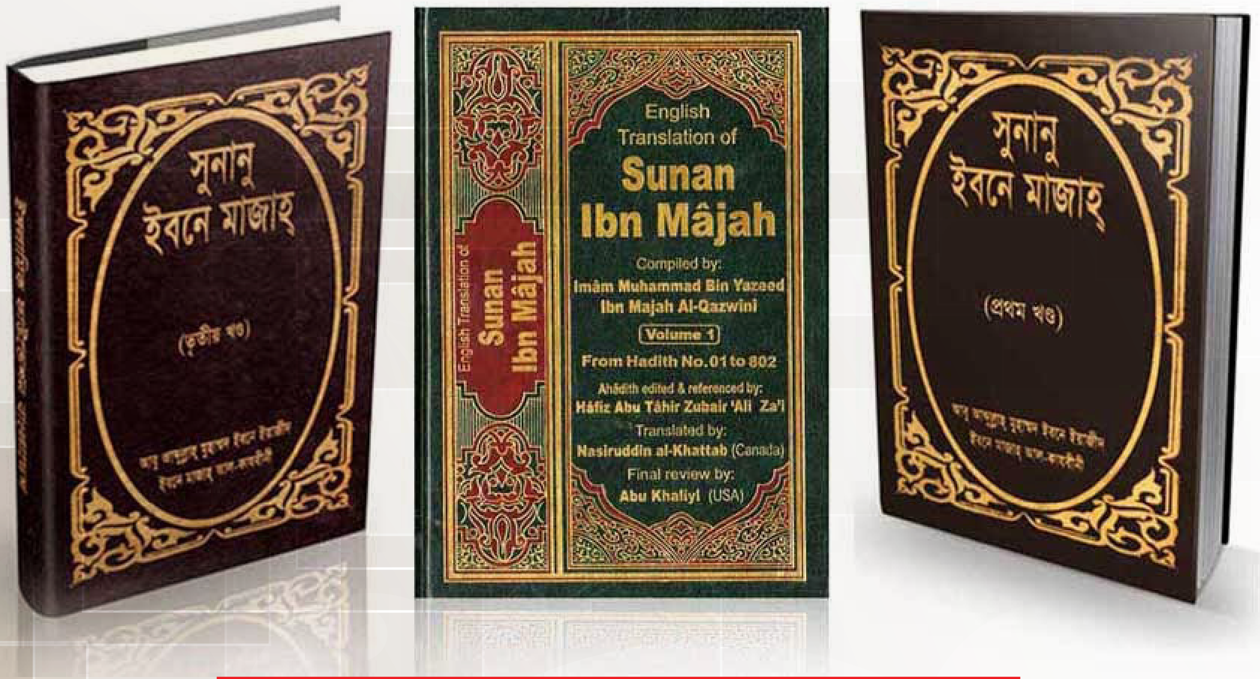
Ibn Majah was an eminent scholar and memorizer of hadith. He reminds us of his ancestor **Salman Al-Farisi** who was born in the Persian lands and crossed through different places searching for the true religion. He abandoned the Magus beliefs and traveled to the Levant where he met Christian monks and adopted Christianity. Then, he was informed by one of the monks about the oncoming of the last Prophet (peace be upon him) who will appear in Arabia. Salman did not slacken, and continued his way until he reached Madinah and waited there until the migration of Prophet Muhammad to follow him and accept Islam. Our scholar, Ibn Majah, was a diligent seeker as well, but a seeker of the knowledge of hadith.

Ibn Majah's Birth and Early Life

Abu `Abdullah ibn Majah was born in **209 AH** in Qazwin (Qazvin, Iran) in a practicing family of knowledge. His home city was conquered during the Caliphate of `Uthman ibn `Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) in 24 AH and became a center of knowledge. It presented great religious scholars like Al-Hafizh `Ali ibn Muhammad At-Tanafisi, Al-Hafizh `Amr ibn Rafi` Al-Bajali and Isma`il ibn Tawbah.

Imam Ibn Majah was born during the Caliphate of Al-Ma'mun, whose rule witnessed a rising prosperity in all branches of knowledge. Ibn Majah rose up fond of knowledge, specially the religious sciences. He memorized the Qur'an and commenced seeking the religious sciences such as Fiqh, Hadith, Tafsir, etc. at an early age. He found in himself a special attachment to Hadith. He applied himself for narrating hadith and frequented the circles of hadith scholars in his home city, including the above mentioned scholars. His soul yearned for traveling for seeking knowledge, just as his ancestor Salman did, and as it was the custom of all seekers of hadith at that time. He made his first journey for seeking hadith at the age of 22.

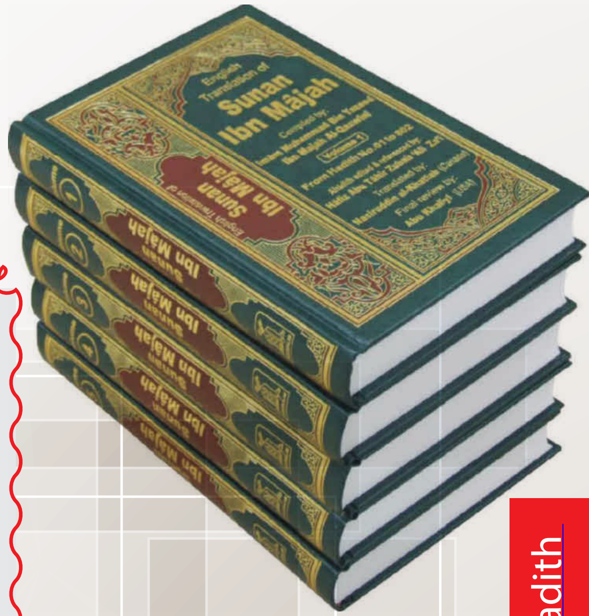
Ibn Majah's Pursuit of Knowledge



Ibn Majah travelled to plentiful places and learned at the hands of the scholars of hadith at his time. He journeyed to Khorasan, Basra, Kufa, Baghdad, Damascus, Makkah, Madinah, Egypt, and other places. In each territory he visited, Imam Ibn Majah would remain with its scholars until he acquire their full knowledge. Among his famous Sheikhs were Ibrahim ibn Al-Mundhir Al-Hizami, Muhammad ibn `Abdullah ibn Numayr, Harmalah ibn Yahya, Al-Hafizh Al-Hilwani Al-Khallal, Isma`il ibn Musa Al-Fazari, Jabarah ibn Al-Mughallas, `Abdullah ibn Mu`awiyah, Hisham ibn `Ammar, Muhammad ibn Rumh, Dawud ibn Rashid, Mus`ab ibn Az-Zubairi, Abu Bakr ibn Abu Shaybah, Abu Mus`ab Az-Zuhri, and many others.

After arduous journeys that took more than fifteen years, Ibn Majah returned back to his homeland where he was devoted for compilation and dissemination of knowledge. He stayed in his homeland teaching and narrating hadith to his students. He was frequented by masses of students who came from everywhere to learn at his hands and narrate hadith from him. Among his students were Muhammad As-Saffar, Is-Haq ibn Muhammad, Sulayman Al-Qazwini, Ibn Sibawayh, `Ali ibn Ibrahim Al-Qattan, `Ali ibn Sa`id Al-Ghaddani, Ibrahim ibn Dinar Al-Jarshi, `Ali ibn Ibrahim ibn Salamah, Ja`far ibn Idris and many others.

Ibn Majah's Writings



Imam Ibn Majah wrote numerous books topped by his well-known book of hadith As-Sunan. This book received high praise from the scholars of hadith for his special approach and the fact that it included authentic hadiths not found in the other books of Sunan or the Sahihs of **Al-Bukhari and Muslim.** He also compiled a great book in Tafsir, as mentioned, in Al-Bidayah wa An-Nihayah, but unfortunately it was lost. He also wrote a book of history that covered the era of the Prophet to his time. This book remained long after his demise, as stated by At-Tahir Al-Maqdisi and Ibn Khallikan but it was also lost.

Scholars' Praise of Ibn Majah

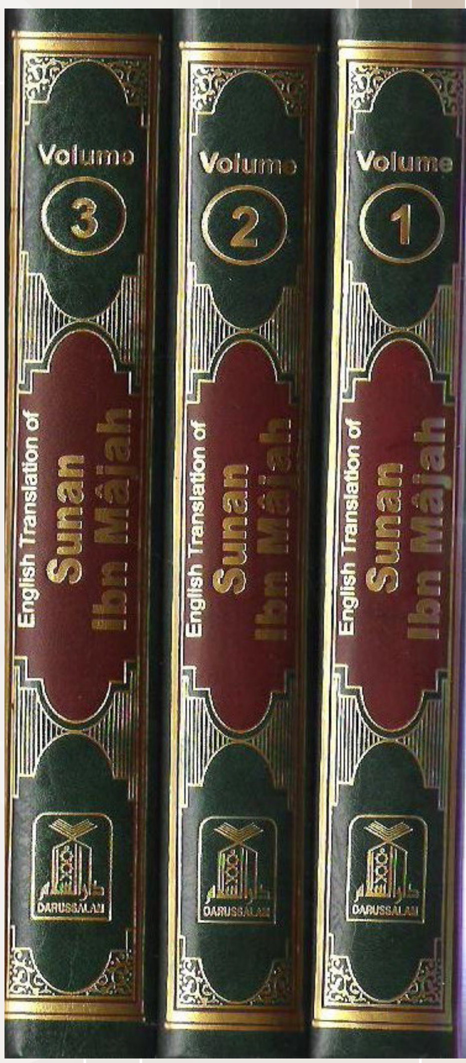
- **Abu Ya`la Al-Khalili** said, "Scholars are in agreement that Ibn Majah is a great trustworthy scholar whose views are valid for argument. He has full awareness of Hadith and he was an excellent memorizer of hadiths. In addition, he compiled in different branches of knowledge including Sunan, Tafsir (exegesis of the Qur'an) and history. He was well versed in these areas.

- **Al-Hafizh Al-Mizzi** said, "Ibn Majah is a memorizer of Hadith and compiler of As-Sunan. He had many beneficial writings and numerous scientific journeys.

- **Al Hafizh Adh-Dhahabi** said, "Muhammad ibn Yazid (Ibn Majah) is a great memorizer of hadith and eminent exegete of the Qur'an. He wrote in hadith, history and Tafsir. He was the peerless memorizer of hadith in Qazwin.

- **Adh-Dhahabi also** said, "Ibn Majah was a great memorizer and honest critic of hadith, and his knowledge was so extensive."

- **Al-Hafizh ibn Hajar** said, "Ibn Majah was one of the leading scholars, and a memorizer of hadith. He wrote in hadith, Tafsir and history."



Ibn Majah's Death

After a lifetime full of learning, teaching and compiling books in hadith and other religious sciences, Imam Ibn Majah passed away in the **22th of Ramadan, 273 AH.**

May Allah confer His mercy upon Ibn Majah and reward him all the best for his scientific journey, circles of knowledge and useful compilations!

References

- Siyar A`lam An-Nubalaa' by Adh-Dhahabi
- Tadhkirat Al-Huffazh by Adh-Dhahabi
- Al-Bidayah wa An-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir
- Tarikh Baghdad by Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi
- Tarikh Dimashq, by Ibn `Asakir
- Tahdhib At-Tahdhib by Ibn Hajar Al-`Asqalani
- Fath Al-Bari Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari by Ibn Hajar Al-`Asqalani
- Abjad Al-`Ulum by Al-Qanuji
- Tabaqat Al-Huffazh by Jalaluddin As-Siyuti
- Mu`jam Al-Buldan by Yaqut Al-Hamawi
- Imam At-Tirmidhi, by Iyad Khalid At-Tabba`
- Al-A`lam, by Az-Zirikli
- Tabaqat Ash-Shafi`iyyah Al-Kubrah by At-Taj As-Subki
- Tahdhib Al-Kamal by Al-Hafizh Al-Mizzi
- Tahdhib At-Tahdhib by Ibn Hajar
- Wafiyyat Al-A`yan by Ibn Khallikan
- Al-Wafi bi Al-Wafiyyat by As-Safadi

EDC Publications

